

shrub cover consisting mostly of *Acacia burkittii* with some mulga (*A. aneura*) and kurrajong (*Brachychiton gregorii*). At the base of the slope were occasional small salmon gums (*Eucalyptus salmophloia*) and a few mallees (*E. foecunda*, unnamed variety). The ground cover consisted largely of fairly sparse dried grass.

The plants were identified by Mr. Royce.

—J. H. CALABY, Canberra.

Scarlet-chested Parrot at Laverton.—Since our arrival at Laverton in April 1956 the first record of the Scarlet-chested Parrot (*Neophema splendida*) was made in February or March of 1957. This was a male bird which was brought in by a school girl who found it alive with a damaged wing near a fence close to the township. The weather had been particularly stormy, and the parrot had apparently become a victim. In spite of every care the bird was found dead next morning. The brilliance of the colours was most noticeable. The main points, from memory of an accidentally destroyed kodachrome of the subject, were: (a) the nuggety shape of the parrot, unlike the slenderness of the budgerygah; (b) beautiful blending of blues on the head and throat; (c) deep, almost orange-yellow abdomen; (d) brilliant red breast; (e) beak very dark grey. There was a rich green on the back and some blue on the wings.

Bird watching has been carried out at many windmill troughs since then, but there were no further records until March 30, 1958, when a possible sighting of a pair was made along a creek 8 miles N.E. of Laverton. These birds flew into mulga and were observed by the writer and wife, though not through binoculars. The birds were fairly timid and flew before a very clear view could be obtained. Most noticeable, through the light screen of foliage, was the splash of brilliant red on one bird. The country around Laverton is chiefly flat mulga plains with many dry watercourses along which mallee grow frequently.

—KEVIN GRIFFITHS, State School, Laverton.

Extension of Known Range of Some Western Australian Birds.—The following observations extend the range of four species of birds as outlined by Serventy and Whittell in their *Birds of Western Australia*.

A Painted Quail (*Turnix varia*) was flushed from the ground at the deserted Naendip Copper Mine on March 7, 1958. The mine is located in low stony hills near the head of Dempster Inlet (30 miles west of Hopetoun). The vegetation around here is mostly mallee (*Eucalyptus annulata*, *E. redunca*, *E. tetragona*, *E. platypus*, and *E. lehmanni*) but in the immediate vicinity of the mine there is a relatively open stand of flat-topped yate (*E. occidentalis*). The previous easternmost record of the species was at Broomehill, 110 miles to the west.

To be added to the list of breeding stations of the Bridled Tern (*Sterna anathaeta*) are Seal Island (1½ miles east of Cape Leeuwin) and Green Islets (30 miles south of Jurien Bay). On January

27, 1957, Mr. D. Churchill observed Bridled Terns sitting on single eggs laid in joint cracks in the granite-gneiss at Seal Island. Mr. G. Binsted visited the Green Islets on November 28, 1956, when hundreds of Bridled Terns were nesting on ledges and crevices in the aeolianite.

Apparently the White-breasted Robin (*Eopsaltria georgiana*) has not been previously recorded from the Porongorups. The species was quite plentiful there in karri forests on July 8, 1958.

The White-fronted Honeyeater (*Gliciphila albifrons*) was observed on April 27, 1958, 10 miles north-east of Gingin in sandplain vegetation dominated by *Banksia ilicifolia*, *B. attenuata*, *B. menziesii*, *Eucalyptus tottiana*, and *Jacksonia floribunda*.

—G. M. STORR, Nedlands.

Salt-encrustation Hazard to Ducks.—On January 29, 1959, I witnessed a peculiar incident concerning a big flock of Grey Teal (*Anas gibberifrons*) on a very saline lake near my house. I believe if the birds had been left on the lake they would have perished. The salt lake covers an area of about 25 acres and it is a sanctuary for ducks when a shoot is on at the Channels or Lake Mears. Through summer evaporation the surface area had been reduced to about 15 acres, the water overlying a bed of pure salt about six inches thick.

Following an intensive duck shoot on Lake Mears and the Channels about 1,500-1,800 Grey Teal landed on the lake by 7 a.m. They were still there at sundown so I went over for a closer inspection. The flock remained in the water and the birds merely looked at me. I ran into the lake and a few of the birds took to the air, just managing to fly at about four feet and about 15 miles per hour. I ran and caught one of the flying birds and found that every feather on its breast had a bead of salt on it as big as a B.B. shot. All the beads together must have weighed 4 oz.

The birds landed on the salt again and it looked as though I had a major tragedy on my hands. So I organised the children on their bicycles and with myself in the utility flushed the flocks with gunshots and "herded" the slow-flying mob to a big dam. About 40 of the ducks came down in the paddock before they made the dam, but the main flock landed on it. The children gathered up 37 of the ducks that could not reach the dam and threw them into a small fresh-water pool. The salt beads dissolved in about 20 minutes and the birds took off quite well. I gave the ducks on the dam about half an hour and when I walked over the bank (it was nearly dusk) the mob took off with a normal roar of wings and headed for Lake Mears. They had made a mess of the dam preening themselves.

—HENRY G. HALL, Danging.

[A water sample from the lake was sent to the Government Chemical Laboratories, Perth (received on February 20, 1959). Mr. R. C. Gorman (Deputy Government Agricultural Chemist) reported the analyses as follows: Total soluble salts (by evaporation), 41.0%; sodium chloride (calculated from chloride), 30.0%; reaction, faintly acid. Mr. Hall stated that a shower of rain had fallen between the time he witnessed the incident and collected the water sample.—Ed.]